

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 080971 TOSEC 030072
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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 080971 TOSEC 030072

EXDIS FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN AND MR LAKE

FOL RPT LA PAZ 2529 ACTION SECSTATE 29 MAR 78 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 2529

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS PRESIDENT'S PARTY AND SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BL

SUBJECT: MY MEETING WITH BANZER AND THE BOLIVIAN ELECTIONS

REF: LA PAZ 2511

1. PRESIDENT BANZER WANTS TO SEE ME TOMORROW, MARCH 30, AT NOON; THEREFORE I WILL NEED ANY GUIDANCE BEFORE THEN.

2. POLITICAL EVENTS ARE MOVING VERY QUICKLY HERE. POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS APPEARS ALMOST CERTAIN AT THIS POINT. GENERAL PEREDA, DISGUSTED WITH BANZER'S CAVILLATION AND THE MILITARY'S
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PAGE 02 STATE 080971 TOSEC 030072

DOUBTS, MAY ANNOUNCE WITHDRAWAL OF HIS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY TODAY. THIS WOULD MEAN POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS ON EITHER OF TWO BASES. EITHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY DECIDED TO POSTPONE AND PEREDA IS RESPONDING TO THIS (HE TOLD ME LAST NIGHT HE WOULD WITHDRAW IF THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO POSTPONE), OR PEREDA, IN JUMPING THE GUN, WILL FORCE THE POSTPONEMENT. THE CURRENT DISARRAY OF THE MILITARY AND THE CIVILIAN PARTIES

MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE THAT OTHER CANDIDATES OF SUFFICIENT BACKING TO GOVERN THIS COUNTRY COULD BE DEVELOPED IN TIME FOR JULY ELECTIONS.

3. THE MAIN ISSUE REMAINING IN WHICH WE MAY HAVE SOME SMALL INFLUENCE IS WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT TAKES THE HIGH OR THE LOW ROAD ON POSTPONEMENT. THE HIGH ROAD WOULD BE POSTPONEMENT FOR SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR, WITH CONCURRENCE OF CIVILIAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND GUARANTEE OF THE NEWW ELECTION DATE BY THE MILITARY RATHER THAN JUST A MERCURIAL AND INCREASINGLY DISCREDITED BANZER. THE LOW ROAD WOULD BE POSTPONEMENT WITHOUT DATE, BLAMING THIS ON INTERNAL SUBVERSION AND EXTERNAL AGGRESSION (CHILE, US TIN SALES), AND INSTALLING A HARD-LINE GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD TRY TO UNDO THE LIBERALIZATION OF THE LAST SIX MONTHS. AT THE MOMENT THE ODDS APPEAR SLIGHTLY TO FAVOR THE HIGH ROAD. THE LOW ROAD WOULD PROBABLY INCITE SOME VIOLENCE, FROM THE LEFT AND STUDENTS IN PARTICULAR.

BOEKER

UNQUOTE COOPER

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NNN

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